

I am writing to you today as a current satellite TV subscriber who would like to add my voice of support to the pending merger of EchoStar and DIRECTV. It has been frustrating, to say the least, being a rural resident to not be able to receive network broadcasts, local or national. The current system does not allow me to receive any local stations, yet I cannot receive a waiver from the local stations so that I can subscribe to east or west coast feed from my satellite provider. Cable has no intention of ever coming to my area, so my only hope is for this merger to take place which will allow me local area broadcasts. We in rural America are always on the bottom of the list when it comes to receiving any kind of utility, this must change. Approving this merger will provide numerous benefits to consumers like me, including more choices in channels, programming, broadband and new television technologies.

By providing local TV channels everywhere, this merger will make satellite television a strong alternative to cable in our community. Throughout the country, people will now be able to turn to satellite TV to access their local news, weather and community information, in addition to a comprehensive package of national video programming. But just as exciting, the merger will bring the availability of affordable high-speed Internet service by satellite to over 40 million Americans who don't have high-speed Internet access. These tremendous benefits to consumers won't happen without the merger. Satellite-delivered Internet service will bring an affordable and competitive alternative to cable modems and DSL to consumers in big cities, small towns and rural areas alike. This will give me a competitive choice for Internet access and will be especially advantageous to rural communities where cable modems and DSL are not likely to be available anytime in the near future.

In the interest of improving our access to competitive television and Internet service, I